

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, STEWARDSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, AND RECREATION OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 312, A BILL TO REVISE THE BOUNDARY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN BIRTHPLACE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

May 21, 1997

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 312, a bill to revise the boundary of Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site in Larue County, Kentucky, and for other purposes.

We recommend deferring action on S. 312 until we have completed our studies of the Knob Creek Farm. We would be pleased to accept this property if we can document the historical significance of the area. We are about to begin a study of the deed records of the site and also a study of the log cabin to determine its age and if there is any connection with the 16th President. We anticipate that our studies will be completed by September of this year. Until we have sound documentation as to the authenticity of the Knob Creek Farm as it relates to Lincoln, we respectfully request deferral of this legislation.

Abraham Lincoln was born at Sinking Spring Farm, where the birthplace is located, on February 12, 1809, and lived there with his family until he was nearly three years old. In 1811, the family moved 10 miles east of Hodgenville and resided there until he was almost eight years old. Then the Lincolns migrated to the State of Indiana. According to local oral history, the Knob Creek Farm is where

Abraham and older sister Sarah attended their first A-B-C school, and the family attended the Little

Mount Church.

The Knob Creek Farm is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been privately owned for the past 65 years by the Howard Family of New Haven and Howardstown, Kentucky. The 232 acre tract, purchased by Thomas Lincoln (Abraham's father), remains intact. The farm currently provides camping for scout groups hiking the Lincoln Heritage Trail. A small portion of the land is still devoted to farming. This property is operated as a private historical attraction open to the public on a seasonal basis. A log cabin, rebuilt in 1931 with logs from the home of Austin Gollaher, Lincoln's childhood friend, houses a collection of antiques; although not Lincoln-owned, some are of the pioneer era of Lincoln.

Local civic and city, county, and state governmental organizations have voiced their unanimous support for this project. If the Park Service studies document the historical integrity of this site, we would be pleased to recommend its addition to the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site. We look forward to providing you with this information as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.